

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **UTILITY SAVINGS INITIATIVE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD**

**RALEIGH** – An energy savings initiative that grew out of Gov. Mike Easley's efficiency commission has received an award from the National Association of State Chief Administrators. The N.C. Utility Savings Initiative this weekend won NASCA's Outstanding Program Award in Indianapolis for leadership and innovation.

"State agencies and universities are saving money by changing electric rates and conserving our valuable energy and water resources," Easley said. "Innovation and hard work have helped make North Carolina a national leader in energy conservation."

The Utility Savings Initiative was developed as a means to lower costs and conserve energy during lean budget times. The project was proposed in June 2002 by the Governor's Commission to Promote Government Efficiency and Savings on State Spending upon recommendation of the Capital Management Subcommittee. Administration Secretary Gwynn Swinson chaired the subcommittee.

As NASCA's Southeast regional director, Swinson said, "North Carolina's Utility Savings Initiative is setting an example for the nation. Other states can mirror our program and share similar successes."

Gov. Easley sanctioned the project, which was formalized by legislation requiring a comprehensive energy management program for state government. The State Energy Office in the N.C. Department of Administration is overseeing the effort.

The Utility Savings Initiative has helped 25 state agencies and 17 universities reduce utility expenditures and conserve energy and water. A review of electric rates charged to the agencies and universities generated \$881,705 in initial savings, which includes \$288,000 in billing error refunds and a projected \$593,705 in annual savings from verified rate changes. Additional savings will result from reduced energy and water use through statewide efficiency improvements and conservation efforts.

North Carolina state government owns 12,500-plus buildings, totaling more than 96 million square feet. Initiative leaders are hoping to expand the project to facilities leased to the state where utility savings can be realized.

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